

## Plays That Scored and Plays That Bored During the Past Season



George Henry Payne.  
 MAY 11, 1907.—One  
 ask for a more sensational  
 season than the announce-  
 the Big and the Little Sen-  
 come together to do busi-  
 with all the weapons of  
 and key. As a climax  
 theatrical season one could  
 for anything more aston-  
 there is not a part of the  
 season as to whether it was  
 syndicate or anti-syndicate  
 and the activity of the  
 building new theaters, not  
 Mr. Belasco's and Mr.  
 vehement warfare, has ad-  
 through the battle  
 waged, with Forty-two  
 its headquarters.  
 early yet to say just what  
 this new company, in  
 Lee Shubert and Klaw & Er-  
 officers, will be, but there is  
 chance of its affecting the  
 of next season, as it is  
 the purpose of doing only  
 the business.

Over the past season, the  
 feature as regards the  
 been the number of pro-  
 new plays by young Ameri-  
 No important new man has  
 front except William  
 body, whose play, "The  
 with Margaret Anglin  
 Miller as costars, has filled  
 theater for the entire sea-  
 soning play in many ways.  
 Divide," is not by any  
 remarkable specimen of the  
 drama.  
 There are interest-  
 in it, but the thesis is  
 the big, broad Western sit-  
 author has chosen, his hu-  
 seems petty and more cal-  
 interest the New England  
 in the class of public that  
 attracted by what has  
 known as the Western

Mr. Moody's play the most  
 by an American author  
 season was Mr. Broadhurst's  
 "The Hour," which filled the  
 from the night it opened  
 to run there all summer.  
 could have been chosen  
 play dealing with graft  
 season, and the answer of the  
 has been almost unanimous.  
 play is supposed to typify  
 conditions, but these condi-  
 tions in American cities  
 will undoubtedly have the  
 success throughout the  
 it has had here. The  
 play is its delineation  
 characters as we know them

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 Rheumatism.  
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due sales and popularity in-  
 dical virtue, then several  
 compounds can be traced  
 to their birthplace. The  
 drive for public approval or  
 is DR. CAYLEY'S PRE-  
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 Miners' Consumption.  
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 pounders, and  
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 Lake City. The  
 P. O. is next door  
 south.

—the boss and his henchmen—while the  
 weakness of the play is its love story  
 and the very conventional feminine  
 portraiture.  
 As one might expect, Mr. Belasco's  
 production of the season, "The Rose of  
 the Rancho," is one of the most popu-  
 lar plays of the year. It is a charm-  
 ing story of California and magnificent-  
 ly staged. With it New York learned  
 of a new star—a mere slip of a girl  
 who has magnetism and intelligence,  
 beauty and no little ability as an ac-  
 tress. If Miss Frances Starr does not  
 sing but "The Rose of the Rancho,"  
 she will still have earned for herself a  
 very enviable reputation.  
 Paul Armstrong, who has not been  
 heard from since his successful "Heir  
 to the Hoohah," came forward this  
 season with a virile play, in atmos-  
 phere and characterization the strong-  
 est play offered by an American author  
 this season, "Salome Jane." The  
 play is based on Bret Harte's story,  
 "Salome Jane's Kiss." While Miss  
 Eleanor Robson appears in to great ad-  
 vantage, a more robust temperament  
 would seem to more completely fill  
 the author's idea.

In "Brewster's Millions," the  
 dramatization of Mr. McCutcheon's  
 story, "Winchell Smith," New York  
 came to know for the first time Mr.  
 Fred Thompson, of Hippodrome fame,  
 as a thirty-third degree manager. The  
 play is a light entertainment, furnish-  
 ing considerable amusement, and in the  
 third act a remarkable picture of a  
 yacht at sea in a storm is probably the  
 most striking thing that Mr. Thomp-  
 son's mechanical genius has devised,  
 and certainly unparalleled among  
 mechanical stage inventions.  
 William Collier, appearing both as  
 author and actor in his play, "Caught  
 in the Rain," makes the sixth play to  
 fill the theater in which it offered from  
 the day of its production. Really an  
 amusing farce, "Caught in the Rain"  
 is Collieresque from the start to the  
 finish.

Not distinguished by long runs, but  
 rotatable in other ways, were Mr. Wil-  
 liam Gillett's "Clarice," and Langdon  
 Mitchell's "The New York Idea." Mr.  
 Gillett in his new play (new to New  
 York; it has been seen throughout the  
 country) pictured a consumptive who  
 chooses to commit suicide under the  
 erroneous impression that his death is  
 imminent. There was much cleverness  
 in the construction and some of the  
 smaller scenes, but the actor had over-  
 elaborated the part he played himself,  
 and the play failed to grip.  
 "The New York Idea," ought to  
 prove a popular title on the road,  
 where the impression is that most New  
 Yorkers spend their time getting in or  
 out of a divorce. Scintillating comedy  
 Mr. Mitchell has made for Mrs. Piske,  
 but it was just a trifle too smart. More  
 brilliant dialogue one rarely listens to  
 on the stage, but the author has sacri-  
 ficed solidarity to brilliancy, and while  
 the play was intensely amusing, it was  
 very suggestive of the Oscar Wilde  
 school of drama.

A year ago the dramatist who was  
 most talked of in this country was Mr.  
 Charles Klein, who, out of "The Lion  
 and the Mouse" and "The Music Mas-  
 ter," was said to be making something  
 like \$3000 a week. Naturally his new  
 play was looked forward to with great  
 interest, but "The Daughters of Men"  
 failed to catch the public as "The Lion  
 and the Mouse" did, and rather empha-  
 sized the fact that those who be-  
 lieved that "The Lion and the Mouse,"  
 despite its great popular success, was  
 a very bad play. That play completed  
 its run of six hundred nights only a  
 few weeks ago and is still the subject  
 of discussion among people interested  
 in the theater, no two persons seem-  
 ing to agree as to why it lasted as long  
 as it did. That it came at a time when  
 the public was ripe for some theatrical  
 assault or exposure of the capitalist  
 undoubtedly helped. The impersonation  
 of Mr. Edmund Breese of the part of  
 John P. Rayner was another very  
 strong factor.

One of the curious features of the  
 season was that there was no new play  
 from the man who has undoubtedly  
 written the greatest of American  
 dramas, Mr. Augustus Thomas. Next  
 season, however, we are to have two  
 plays, one said to be a powerfully built  
 drama on the subject of hypnotism, and  
 by the author's friends declared to be  
 a greater play than even his "Ariz-  
 zona," "Alabama," or "In Mizou-  
 ra." The other play, in which Mr.  
 Dustin Farnum will star, is in a meas-  
 ure a return to what has been called  
 the "State plays" of Mr. Thomas, be-  
 ing a picture of Mexico, the result of  
 a winter's sojourn and study in that  
 country.  
 Only a few years ago it was custom-  
 ary to associate Mr. Clyde Fitch with  
 Mr. Thomas as the two leading Ameri-  
 can dramatists. Mr. Fitch's plays have  
 continued to have a certain vogue.

Miss Ethel Barrymore,  
 in "His Excellency  
 the Governor"  
 photo by Searcy

Miss Ellen Terry  
 in "Repertoire"  
 photo by Searcy

Miss Nance O'Neil  
 in "Cleo"  
 photo by Searcy

though there has been a steadily in-  
 creasing depreciation. The climax came  
 this season, when Mr. Fitch turned out  
 four plays and the public turned every  
 one of them down. His dramatization  
 of Mrs. Wharton's "House of Mirth"  
 ran one week, and his "Girl Who Had  
 Everything," with Miss Robson as the  
 star, filled a brief engagement at the  
 Liberty, while the town amused itself  
 with many suggestions to the effect that  
 the "Girl Who Had Everything" might  
 find it necessary to divide with  
 Mr. Fitch if he continued to turn out  
 plays of that calibre.  
 On February 19 Mr. Fitch produced  
 two plays at different theaters and re-  
 sponded to the call for "author" at  
 both theaters—the Criterion and the  
 Astor. "The Straight Road," written  
 for Miss Blanche Walsh, was roundly  
 condemned for its vulgarity, while  
 "The Truth" (with Mrs. Clara Blood-  
 good) suffered greatly from the au-  
 thor's inability to understand that the  
 American husband does not take it as  
 a matter of course, or as a joke, that  
 a young good-for-nothing should en-  
 deavor to effect a liaison with his wife.  
 The success of Mr. Fitch in the past  
 has had its bad effect in that some of  
 the younger American dramatists  
 have observed too closely the methods  
 by which he has won public favor.  
 Clever, Mr. Fitch is undoubtedly, but  
 it is an episodic cleverness, a tricky  
 cleverness. Caricature is substituted for  
 characterization, and when he

touches the emotional it is impossible  
 not to feel that he has his tongue in  
 his cheek.  
 One of the biggest successes of the  
 year has been Mr. James Forbes's  
 "The Chorus Lady," and this is one  
 of the plays that I would characterize  
 as displaying the Fitch influence. The  
 first act is really good, but after that  
 the author uses all the Fitch tricks  
 and the play swings between melod-  
 rama and horseplay. The main  
 character, Patricia O'Brien, is supposed  
 to be the slangy chorus girl, and here  
 is the germ of a good dramatic  
 idea. But in order to get "laughs"  
 the author has stuffed his character  
 with slangy "sayings" almost to the  
 point of boredom.  
 Another clever play that suffered  
 from the same influence was  
 "Clothes," by Messrs. Pollock and  
 Hapwood. Mr. Pollock is undoubtedly  
 a coming dramatist, and up to now  
 there has been evidence of a fine virile  
 point of view. But whether it was the  
 title or an obsession produced by writ-  
 ing on so essentially a feminine topic,  
 this play suggested Fitch too often  
 for its good.  
 From the English authors, usually  
 our prolific producers, we have had but  
 two plays that were successful—"His  
 House in Order," by Arthur W.  
 Pinero, and "The Hypocrites," by  
 Henry Arthur Jones. "His House in  
 Order" is really a great play, pick-

flaws in it as one will. In the opinion  
 of the writer it is one of the greatest  
 plays that the author has written, and  
 in an interesting talk with the author  
 last summer at his home in London  
 one might deduce that Mr. Pinero him-  
 self is inclined to look at it as his  
 "golden-haired child." The produc-  
 tion here was in the principal better  
 than that which I saw in London.  
 Never has Mr. John Drew been more  
 sincere and more effective, and Miss  
 Margaret Livingston in one night placed  
 herself among American actresses of  
 whom one may expect great things.  
 "The Hypocrites" of Mr. Jones was  
 a ingenuous effort, probably written  
 ten years ago, for it reeked with the  
 old "sex against sex" battle that  
 interested the didactic dramatists of  
 a decade ago.

New York has not lost its interest in  
 George Bernard Shaw, and this season  
 three of his plays hitherto unproduced  
 in this country were offered to the  
 public with but little success. Mr. Forbes  
 Robertson achieved little less than an  
 artistic triumph in "Caesar and Cleo-  
 patra," but it is doubtful if the play  
 would have had the run that it did if  
 it were not for that actor's interesting  
 personality and striking ability.  
 "Widowers' Houses" was produced at  
 a series of matinees and proved to be  
 the least interesting of the Shaw plays  
 that we have seen. Miss Ellen Terry  
 opened her tour in this country with

"Captain Brassbound's Conversion,"  
 and again the audience were listless.  
 This was followed shortly after by a  
 revival of "Mrs. Warren's Profession,"  
 which over a year ago, had one per-  
 formance in New York, the follow-  
 ing it will be remembered—stopping it and  
 closing the theater. As the writer con-  
 tended then, the police were not neces-  
 sary; the public itself would have closed  
 the theater in very little time if such  
 a hubbly had not been made over the  
 play. The crime of the play is not so  
 much the open discussion of harlotry  
 as it is Mr. Shaw's insincerity—his in-  
 ability to be serious when drawing a  
 tragic subject—his great artistic error  
 in making laughable that which to  
 every right thinking person is a mat-  
 ter of tears.

What would a theatrical season in  
 New York be without its quota of that  
 peculiar form of entertainment that  
 was once known as comic opera, but  
 has more recently become "the musical  
 melange," "the musical cocktail,"  
 "the musical fantasy," etc., etc.? The  
 public has grown a bit tired of having  
 the theatrical reporter hark back to  
 the days of Gilbert and Sullivan, but  
 for generations to come that combi-  
 nation of librettist and composer is  
 bound to remain an ideal, an idol and  
 idol.

There are eighty-two reasons why we  
 have not librettos that are worthy of  
 the Gilbert and Sullivan tradition. One  
 will suffice. The man who can write  
 a good libretto is able to write a good  
 play, and he sees no particular reason  
 why he should divide the royalties with  
 a composer.  
 One man has appeared on the field who  
 has shown that he has the ability of  
 the dramatist allied to the willingness  
 to be a librettist. That man is Henry  
 Blossom, whose "Mlle. Modiste" last  
 year and whose "Red Mill" this year  
 are both distinct advances in the field  
 of the comic opera "book." Blossom  
 has ideas, he has a sense of the  
 dramatic, and, weird and wonderful  
 thing in modern comic opera, he has a  
 sense of characterization. Somehow or  
 another, by strange sleight of hand he  
 succeeds in getting into his librettos a

line here and there that makes you feel  
 that his characters are human, have  
 some history and being, and are not the  
 mere puppets of the stage marked  
 "tenor," "barytone," "contralto"—  
 "STAR."  
 No play, operatic or otherwise, has  
 been as successful this year as "The  
 Red Mill" of Henry Blossom and Victor  
 Herbert. It is hardly necessary to  
 speak of the music of Victor Herbert—  
 that can always be counted on to be  
 fresh, tuneful and scholarly. Much as  
 we like and respect Herbert, I do not  
 think we quite appreciate what a mas-  
 ter he is of the humorous in music. Moz-  
 art would have been fond of Herbert  
 had he known him, but Mozart had  
 many misfortunes. This was one of them  
 —he did not know Herbert.

It would be unjust not to say that a  
 great measure of "The Red Mill's"  
 success was due to Montgomery and  
 Stone, who appear for the first time in  
 "straight parts" after their long car-  
 eer in the odd "make-up" of "The  
 Wizard of Oz."  
 Other successful "musical shows"  
 were Hattie Williams, in "The Little  
 Cherub," Anna Held, in "The Parisian  
 Model," Sam Bernard, in "The Rich  
 Mr. Hoggenheimer," and Eddie Foy,  
 in "The Orchid."

Farewell to the season for several  
 distinguished actors means farewell to  
 the stage this year. Joe Weber says  
 he will retire, Edna May has already  
 said "Goodbye," and that charming  
 comedienne, Fay Templeton, announces  
 that this year is her last. This a strange  
 world. When a woman marries she  
 quits the field of labor—artistic or oth-  
 erwise. When a man marries—but this  
 discussion is not properly in the domain  
 of either entertainment or amusement.

Should Not Be Too Cruel.  
 Philadelphia Public Ledger.  
 A missionary who advocated elevation  
 of the Filipinos through introduction of  
 baseball surely does not intend to ac-  
 quaint the simple native with the lingo,  
 too.

## TEN MOST SUCCESSFUL PLAYS OF THE YEAR

Play	Author	Manager	Star or Featured Performer	Length of Run
The Hypocrites	Henry Arthur Jones	Charles Frohman	Miss Jessie Millward	16 weeks.
His House in Order	A. W. Pinero	John Drew	Rose Stahl	16 weeks.
The Chorus Lady	James Forbes	W. B. Harris	Margaret Anglin	Entire season.
The Great Divide	W. D. Moody	Henry Miller	Edward Abner	Entire season.
Brewster's Millions	Charles and Ceciley	Frederic Thompson	Miss Eleanor Robson	16 weeks.
Salome Jane	Paul Armstrong	The Lieblers	Miss Minnie Dupree	16 weeks.
The Road to Yesterday	Sumnerland	Sumnerland	Miss Frances Starr	21 weeks.
The Rose of the Rancho	Belasco	Belasco	George Fawcett	20 times.
The Man of the Hour	Broadhurst	W. A. Brady	Charles Frohman	150 times.
Caught in the Rain	Miller and Stewart	Miller and Stewart	William Collier	150 times.

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